

# STARK COUNTY ENGINEER

**Keith A. Bennett, P.E., P.S.**

5165 Southway Street, S.W.  
Canton, Ohio 44706-1998  
Phone (330) 477-6781  
Fax (330) 477-3926



---

Werner Church Project PID 81282  
Public Involvement – Summary of and Response to Comments  
12/14/2012

A public involvement meeting was held for the Werner Church Bridge Project on October 25, 2012 at the Plain Township Hall from 5 PM to 7 PM. The meeting was advertised on the Stark County Engineer's (SCEO) website, in ads in the Canton Repository, and by direct mailings to property owners of all parcels with potential right of way takes from each of the alternatives. Additionally, signage was placed within the right of way on Werner Church Road and Middlebranch Avenue. The signs were on location for four days prior to the public meeting, and contained the time, date and location of the public involvement meeting.

Forty-four people attended the meeting, including seven members of the project team from the County Engineer's office.

**RESIDENT/ATTENDEES CONCERNS SUMMARY** The predominant concerns of the affected residents/property owners in the area of the project are discussed below. Many of these concerns dealt with utility issues, property access, the disposition of the existing bridge, and minimizing total property takes. Additionally, the existing speed limit was also raised as an issue by a number of attendees at the meeting. Six residents/attendees expressed that they felt Alternative 3 was the best alternative to account for future growth and traffic in the area.

**Impact on Utilities** – Three residents/attendees as well as Plain Township trustees in attendance were concerned with potential project impacts to septic systems and water wells, and the disposition of other utilities or possible inclusion of new utility services with this project. Any impact to a septic system will be addressed with the project. The project will be responsible for replacing any septic system or water well that is adversely impacted by the project. Additionally, SCEO will contact the Stark Metropolitan Sewer District and local water providers once a preferred alternative has been chosen for this project. Those utilities will have the opportunity to expand their services within the project area if they so desire, either during or before the transportation project. Any final decision will be made by the respective utility company.

**Property Access/Driveways and Grades** - Six comments were received that expressed concerns with access to their specific properties. Each respective access issue is dependent on the alternative chosen as the preferred. Access must be maintained to all properties from a public road, and no access to a property will be eliminated with the

project. The SCEO is aware that there are access issues with the Klingaman parcel, which will be bisected by Werner Church Rd. if Alternative 2 or 3 is chosen as the preferred alternative. SCEO will work with the Klingaman's to resolve those access issues as part of final design activities. Additionally, if Alternative 2 or 3 is chosen, access to the Blend parcel will be retained on both sides of Nimishillen Creek. The existing roadway will be left in place to the degree necessary to provide access to this parcel from a public roadway. Driveway grades will also be addressed in final design. With the final design of the project, SCEO will make every effort to provide drive access that meets current design criteria for width, drive angle, and profile grade.

**The Existing Bridge** – Two residents/attendees asked what was to be done with the old bridge if Alternative 2 or 3 is chosen. The question asked was whether the old bridge could be left in use for Stark Parks. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 protects publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and public or privately-owned historical resources. Therefore, SCEO will continue to coordinate this project with Stark Parks. If Stark Parks is interested in retaining ownership of the old bridge, arrangements will be made for that to happen as part of the project. Otherwise, the existing bridge will be removed as part of the project.

**Total Property Takes** - Two residents/attendees mentioned that both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 resulted in the potential total take of two residential parcels on Middlebranch Avenue. These parcels were identified as 7422 Middlebranch Avenue and 7418 Middlebranch Avenue. The residents of both of these parcels asked whether anything could be done to avoid taking their homes, or whether other alternatives were considered. With regard to the residence at 7418 Middlebranch Avenue, if Alternative 2 or 3 is the preferred alternative, SCEO will work with the property owner and make every effort to modify the proposed alignment to leave that residence in place. It should be noted that the conceptual design of Alternatives 2 and 3 show the south edge of pavement/curb just overlapping the northern edge of the residence at 7418 Middlebranch Avenue. Based upon this and project design criteria, we believe that the alignment of Alternative 2 or Alternative 3 can be modified to avoid taking this home. We will make every effort to do that as final design proceeds. With regard to the residential structure at 7422 Middlebranch Avenue, that structure (residence and separate garage) is directly across Middlebranch Avenue at the location of Applegrove Street, making it impossible to avoid a total take. During conceptual design and as a result of a comment received, SCEO and the project team did investigate other alignments to the north of this location. Relocation of the roadway to the north would require reconstruction of the Applegrove Street crossing with the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad, possible total take of the

northwest quadrant of the intersection of Applegrove Street and Middlebranch Avenue, and substantive impacts to the Middlebranch Elementary School Parking lot, building and septic system resulting in a project cost increase in excess of \$700,000.

**Speed Limits** – Two comments were received that mentioned excessive speed and lack of enforcement of the speed limit. The SCEO did submit a speed study for Werner Church Road to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in 2009. The speed limit on Werner Church Avenue is 55 MPH, the speed limit on Middlebranch Avenue is 35 MPH, and the Speed Limit on Applegrove Street is 45 MPH currently. The 2009 speed study as submitted requested a reduction of the speed limit on Werner Church Ave., however, the criteria was not met, and the speed limit reduction was denied. The SCEO is in the process of submitting a new speed study and speed reduction request for Werner Church Ave. This new study will be submitted to ODOT in December 2012.